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HISTORY OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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Sixteenth to eighteenth centuries

The first English grammar, Pamphlet for Grammar by William Bullokar, written with the seeming goal of demonstrating that English was quite as rule-bound as Latin, was published in 1586.[1] Bullokar's grammar was faithfully modeled on William Lily's Latin grammar, *Rudimenta Grammatices* (1534).[2] Lily's grammar was being used in schools in England at that time, having been "prescribed" for them in 1542 by Henry VIII.[1] Although Bullokar wrote his grammar in English and used a "reformed spelling system" of his own invention, many English grammars, for much of the century after Bullokar's effort, were to be written in Latin; this was especially so for books whose authors were aiming to be scholarly.[1] Christopher Cooper's *Grammatica Linguæ Anglicanæ* (1685) was the last English grammar written in Latin.[3]

The yoke of Latin grammar writing bore down oppressively on much of the early history of English grammars. The goal of grammarians was to assimilate a reading and writing system that taught English speakers of all different social classes the same equitable pattern, relying on a set of new guidelines taken from their Latin language rules.[4] Any attempt by one author to assert an independent grammatical rule for English was quickly followed by equal declarations by others of truth of the corresponding Latin-based equivalent.[5] Even as late as the early nineteenth century, Lindley Murray, the author of one of the most widely used grammars of the day, was having to cite "grammatical authorities" to bolster the claim that grammatical cases in English are different from those in Ancient Greek or Latin.[5]

The focus on tradition, however, belied the role that other social forces had already begun to play in the early seventeenth century. In particular, increasing

commerce, and the social changes it wrought, created new impetus for grammar writing.[5] On the one hand, greater British role in international trade created demand for English grammars for speakers of other languages. Consequently, grammars were published in various European languages in the second half of the seventeenth century.[5] On the other hand, English grammars were being written for "non-learned, native-speaker audiences" in Britain, such as women, merchants, tradesmen, and children.[5] With education becoming more widespread by the early eighteenth century, many grammars, such as John Brightland's *A Grammar of the English tongue* (1759) and James Greenwood's *Essay towards a practical English grammar*, were intended for those without a Latin background, including the "fair sex" and children.[5]

If by the end of the seventeenth century English grammar writing had made a modest start, totaling 16 new grammars since Bullokar's Pamphlet of 115 years before, by the end of the eighteenth, the pace was positively brisk; 270 new titles were added during that century.[6] 83 percent of these titles were published in the late eighteenth century.[7] Both publishing and demand, moreover, would continue to mushroom. The first half of the nineteenth century would see the appearance of almost 900 new books on English grammar.[6] Showing little originality, most new books took the tack of claiming—as justification for their appearance—that the needs of their particular target audience were still unmet or that a particular "grammatical point" had not been treated adequately in the preexisting texts, or oftentimes both.[6] Texts that were both utilitarian and egalitarian were proliferating everywhere. Edward Shelley's *The people's grammar; or English grammar without difficulties for 'the million'* (1848), for example, was written for "the mechanic and hard-working youth, in their solitary struggles for the acquirement of knowledge." [6] Similarly, William Cobbett's popular mid-century

book was titled, A Grammar of the English Language, In a Series of Letters:
Intended for the Use of Schools and of Young Persons in General, but more
especially for the use of Soldiers, Sailors, Apprentices, and Plough-Boys.

Eighteenth-century prescriptive grammars

In 1745, Ann Fisher published her English Grammar which has been argued to have had influence on grammarians in the 18th century to follow and printed in more than 30 numbered editions, making it one of the most popular early English grammars and the first written by a woman. Later, Robert Lowth, Bishop of Oxford and thereafter of London, scholar of Hebrew poetry, and for a short time Oxford Professor of Poetry, was one of the best known of the widely emulated grammarians of the 18th century. A self-effacing clergyman, he published A Short Introduction to English Grammar, with critical notes (1762), his only work on the subject, without the author's name on the title page. His influence extended, through the works of his students Lindley Murray and William Cobbett, well into the late 19th century. He would also become, among prescriptive grammarians, the target of choice for the criticism meted out by later descriptivist linguists. Lowth wrote against preposition stranding, using "whose" as the possessive case of "which", and using "who" instead of "whom" in certain cases.

In America in 1765, the American Rev. Dr. Samuel Johnson, founder and first president of King's College in New York City (now Columbia University) published in New York An English Grammar; the First Easy Rudiments of Grammar Applied to the English Tongue. It "appears to have been the first English grammar prepared by an American and published in America." [8] In 1767, Johnson combined it with a Hebrew grammar, and published it as An English and Hebrew grammar, being the first short rudiments of those two languages, suggesting the languages be taught together to children, which went to four more imprints by 1776. [9] Johnson developed his grammars independently of Lowth, but later corresponded and exchanged grammars with him. [10]

In 2003, scholar Karen Cajka described nine English women who published grammars in the late eighteenth century: Ellin Devis, Dorothea Du Bois, Mrs. M. C. Edwards, Mrs. Eves, Ellenor Fenn (aka Mrs. Teachwell and Mrs. Lovechild), Ann Fisher, Jane Gardiner née Arden, Blanche Mercy, and Mrs. Taylor. They "together published a total of twelve discrete grammars, with over one hundred documented editions appearing well into the nineteenth century".[11] The study of English grammar was seen as important in learning how to write English well, and in learning other languages later.[12] It held a strong significance to many people in the United States with little to no income, and sparse educational backgrounds, ranging from former slaves, to rail splitters or weavers. Learning it permitted individuals like these to speak and write the language with passionate fluency, helping them expand on their careers.[13]

Nineteenth century to present

It was during the nineteenth century that modern-language studies became systematized.[14] In the case of English, this happened first in continental Europe, where it was studied by historical and comparative linguists.[14] In 1832, Danish philologist Rasmus Rask published an English grammar, *Engelsk Formlære*, part of his extensive comparative studies in the grammars of Indo-European languages.[14] German philologist Jacob Grimm, the elder of the Brothers Grimm, included English grammar in his monumental grammar of Germanic languages, *Deutsche Grammatik* (1822–1837).[14] German historical linguist Eduard Adolf Maetzner published his 1,700 page *Englische Grammatik* between 1860 and 1865; an English translation, *An English grammar: methodical, analytical and historical* appeared in 1874.[14] Contributing little new to the intrinsic scientific study of English grammar, these works nonetheless showed that English was being studied seriously by the first professional linguists.[14]

As phonology became a full-fledged field, spoken English began to be studied scientifically as well, generating by the end of the nineteenth century an international enterprise investigating the structure of the language. This enterprise comprised scholars at various universities, their students who were training to be teachers of English, and journals publishing new research.[14] All the pieces were in place for new "large-scale English grammars" which combined the disparate approaches of the previous decades.[14] The first work to lay claim to the new scholarship was British linguist Henry Sweet's *A new English grammar: logical and historical*, published in two parts, *Phonology and Accidence* (1892) and *Syntax* (1896), its title suggesting not only continuity and contrast with Maetzner's earlier work, but also kinship with the contemporary *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (begun 1884), later the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1895).[14]

Two other contemporary English grammars were also influential.[15] English Grammar: Past and Present, by John Collinson Nesfield, was originally written for the market in colonial India. It was later expanded to appeal to students in Britain as well, from young men preparing for various professional examinations to students in "Ladies' Colleges." [15] Other books by Nesfield include A Junior Course In English Composition, A Senior Course In English Composition, but it was his A Manual Of English Grammar and Composition that proved really successful both in Britain and her colonies—so much so that it formed the basis for many other grammar and composition primers including but not limited to Warriner's English Grammar and Composition, and High School English Grammar and Composition, casually called Wren & Martin, by P. C. Wren and H. Martin. Grammar of spoken English (1924), by H. E. Palmer, written for the teaching and study of English as a foreign language, included a full description of the intonation patterns of English.[15]

The next set of wide-ranging English grammars were written by Danish and Dutch linguists.[16] Danish linguist Otto Jespersen, who had coauthored a few books with Henry Sweet, began work on his seven-volume Modern English grammar on historical principles in the first decade of the twentieth century.[16] The first volume, Sounds and Spellings, was published in 1909; it then took forty years for the remaining volumes on syntax (volumes 2 through 5), morphology (volume 6), and syntax again (volume 7), to be completed.[16] Jespersen's original contribution was in analyzing the various parts of a sentence in terms of categories that he named, rank, junction, and nexus, forgoing the usual word classes. His ideas would inspire the later work of Noam Chomsky and Randolph Quirk.[16]

The Dutch tradition of writing English grammars, which began with Thomas Basson's The Conjugations in Englische and Netherdutch in the same

year—1586—as William Bullokar's first English grammar (written in English), gained renewed strength in the early 20th century in the work of three grammarians: Hendrik Poutsma, Etsko Kruisinga, and Reinard Zandvoort.[16] Poutsma's Grammar of late modern English, published between 1904 and 1929 and written for "continental, especially Dutch students," selected all its examples from English literature.[17]

Timeline of English grammars

1551. John Hart The Opening of the Unreasonable Writing of our Inglish Toung

1586. William Bullokar: Brief Grammar of English.[18]

1594. Paul Greaves: Grammatica Anglicana.[19]

1612. Thomas Tomkis De Analogia Anglicani Sermoni liber Grammaticus, Royal Manuscript Collection of the British Library (12.F.xviii).

1617. Alexander Hume: Orthographie and Congruitie of the Britan Tongue.[19]

1619/1621. Alexander Gill: Logonomia Anglica.[19]

1634. Charles Butler: English Grammar.[20]

1640. Ben Jonson: The English Grammar.[21]

1646. Joshua Poole: The English Accidence.[20]

1653. John Wallis: Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae.[22]

1654. Jeremiah Wharton: The English Grammar.[22]

1662. James Howell: A New English Grammar.[22]

1669. John Newton: School Pastime for Young Children: or the Rudiments of Grammar.[22]

1671. Thomas Lye: The Child's Delight.[23]

1685. Christopher Cooper: Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae.[23]

1688. Guy Miège: The English Grammar.[23]

1693. Joseph Aickin: The English grammar.[23]

1700. A. Lane: A Key to the Art of Letters.[23]

1745. Ann Fisher A New Grammar.[24]

1761. Joseph Priestley: The Rudiments of English Grammar:Adapted to the Use of Schools.

1762. Robert Lowth: A short introduction to English grammar: with critical notes.[25]

1763. John Ash: Grammatical institutes: or, An easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar.[26]

1765. William Ward: An Essay on English Grammar.[27]

1766. Samuel Johnson: A dictionary of the English Language...: to which is prefixed, a Grammar of the English Language.[28]

1772. Joseph Priestley: The Rudiments of English Grammar: Adapted to the Use of Schools.[29]

1775. Ellin Devis: The Accidence[30]

1772. Dorothea Du Bois: Short English Grammar[31]

1795. Lindley Murray: English grammar: adapted to the different classes of learners.[32]

1799. Jane Gardiner: Young Ladies' Grammar[33]

1804. Noah Webster: A Grammatical Institute of the English Language.[34]

1809. William Hazlitt: A New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue

1818. William Cobbett: A Grammar of the English Language, In a Series of Letters.[35]

1850. William Chauncey Fowler: English grammar: The English language in its elements and forms.[36]

1874. Eduard Adolf Maetzner, *An English grammar: methodical, analytical, and historical. With a treatise on the orthography, prosody, inflections and syntax of the English tongue, and numerous authorities cited in order of historical development.* (English translation of *Englische Grammatik* (1860–65)).[37]

1892/98. Henry Sweet: *A New English Grammar, Logical and Historical* (Part 1: Introduction, Phonology, and Accidence; Part 2: Syntax).[38]

1904–1929. Hendrik Poutsma: *A Grammar of Modern English* (5 volumes).[39]

1909–1932. Etsko Kruisinga: *A Handbook of Present-day English*[40]

1909–1949. Otto Jespersen: *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles*.[41]

1931/1935. George O. Curme: *A Grammar of the English Language*.[42]

1945. R. W. Zandvoort: *A Handbook of English Grammar*.[43]

1952. Charles C. Fries: *The Structure of English: An Introduction to the Construction of English Sentences*.[44]

1984. M. A. K. Halliday: *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*.[45]

1985. Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik: *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*.[46]

1999. Douglas Biber, Stig Johansson, Geoffrey Leech, Susan Conrad, and Edward Finegan: *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*.[47]

2002. Rodney Huddleston and Geoffrey Pullum: *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*.[48]

2006. Ronald Carter and Michael McCarthy: *Cambridge Grammar of English: A Comprehensive Guide*.[49]

2011. Bas Aarts: Oxford Modern English Grammar.[50]

1.Aarts, Bas (2011), Oxford Modern English Grammar, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2.Ash, John (1810) [1763], Grammatical institutes: or, An easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar

3.Auer, Anita (2008), "Eighteenth-century grammars and book catalogues", in Tieken-Boon van Ostade, Ingrid (ed.), Grammars, Grammarians and Grammar-Writing in Eighteenth-Century England, Topics in English Linguistics, 59, Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 57–78, doi:10.1515/9783110199185.1.57, ISBN 978-3-11-019627-6

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Source:

www.Wikipedia.com

